

How to overcome being considered overqualified for a job

Applying for jobs and hearing you're overqualified can be a frustrating experience. But while you may be confident the job is an ideal fit for you and that you'll give it your all, to an employer, being overqualified means you represent a risk. The recruitment process is often an expensive one, as are the early days of training a new hire, so a potential employer is looking for an employee that's going to go the distance.

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If this sounds like you, fear not, Kellie Stanborough, HR and recruitment expert at WE Buchan says there are ways to tackle the issue and land the job.

- **Understanding their concerns is key to addressing them.**

Employers may be worried you'll be bored or complacent, or that you'll be looking for a higher-level job straight away- that you see the position as a stopgap to fill in time until something better comes along.

“Employers know employees can feel stagnant if they are not developing or being challenged, and this can cause an employee to lose motivation or feel restricted within the role,” says. For an overqualified candidate, this may well translate into an early exit.

She says an employer may also fear you are used to making more money and will be less willing to take a pay cut for a lower level position, or you'll quickly move on as soon as a higher pay cheque comes along.

Stanborough says it's important to think about what you will and won't be comfortable accepting in terms of salary and be honest with the employer – and

yourself or you risk validating these fears.

- **Being mindful of the language you use when applying.**

Review the advertisement closely and focus on the skills and experience that are relevant to the role in your cover letter. “Take the emphasis off your titles – avoid ‘Head of’, ‘Manager’ or ‘Executive’ early on in your resume or cover letter and focus on telling the employer about your experience and why you are suitable for the role instead,” says Stanborough.

She recommends acknowledging where you are overqualified, and to outline why you are interested in a role that is more junior than your experience.

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For example, if you are returning to work after maternity leave, you can explain you’re looking for a position that is less demanding for at least the next few years. This allows the employer to see they will be trading some flexibility with your family life for a more senior set of skills at a lower cost to them.

- **Show a willingness to learn and grow.** Although you may be overqualified, employers want to see someone is willing to learn and grow in a role. “Someone who has ‘nothing further to learn’ is of no interest to employers and is a red flag for those who will get bored in the role,” Stanborough says.

Likewise, don’t be afraid to ask what the employer and role can do for you. Discuss what you would like to get out of the role, your career objectives and how these will complement each other. This shows you are actively interested in making the role work for you – that just because your skill set may be more advanced than the role, it doesn’t mean there is no scope to add value for you both within the position being offered.

Being considered overqualified doesn’t mean you can’t nab the job – just take the time to consider, then convey why the position works for you, and why you’re the best choice for the employer.